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What are the requirements for applying for licensure as a physical therapist assistant based on equivalent education and training?

The requirements are specified in Section 1398.47 of the Physical Therapy Regulations.

1398.47. Equivalent Training or Experience

A physical therapy aide is an unlicensed person who assists a physical therapist and may be utilized by a physical therapist in his or her practice by performing nonpatient related tasks, or by performing patient related tasks.

- (a) Training and experience considered equivalent to that obtained in an approved physical therapist assistant school shall be acquired in one of the following ways:
 - (1) Military training, consisting of satisfactory completion of a basic hospital corps member course and of a formal physical therapist assistant course that includes a minimum of 550 hours of technical courses relating to physical therapy, and 350 hours of supervised clinical experience. In addition, the applicant shall complete the general education requirements described in subsection (c). The applicant shall have obtained a grade of "C" or better in all formal coursework to be accepted for approval as a physical therapist assistant.
 - (2) A combination of training and 36 months of full-time work experience in physical therapy described in subsection (b). Training shall consist of satisfactory completion of 30 semester units or 40 quarter units of instruction in a variety of the following technical areas: Human anatomy and physiology, including laboratory experience; kinesiology and topographical anatomy; first-aid; basic principles of electromagnetism, mechanics and thermodynamics, biomechanics, and massage; application of therapeutic exercise and modalities for the physically disabled; survey of pathophysiological conditions resulting from injury or disease; ethics; and laws relating to physical therapy. In addition, the applicant shall complete the general education requirements described in subsection (c). The application shall have obtained a grade of "c" or better in all technical coursework to be accepted for approval as a physical therapist assistant. For those applicants who file an application for approval after June 30, 1996, 18 months of the work experience shall be in providing patient related tasks under the orders, direction and immediate supervision of a physical therapist in an acute care inpatient facility.
 - (3) Sixty (60) months of full-time work experience in physical therapy described in subsection (b). For those applicants who file an application for approval after June 30, 1996, 30 months of the work experience shall be in providing patient related tasks under the order, direction and immediate supervision of a physical therapist in an acute care inpatient facility. In addition, the applicant shall complete the general education requirements described in subsection (c).
 - (4) Successful completion of professional education described in subdivisions (b)(1), (b)(4), (b)(5), and (b)(8) of Section 2650 of the code and of the general education requirements described in subsection (c).

- (b) Work experience used to satisfy subsections (a)(2) and (a)(3), shall be obtained under the orders, direction and immediate supervision of (1) a physical therapist licensed by the committee, (2) a physical therapist employed by the United States Government, or (3) an out-of-state licensed physical therapist who has qualifications equivalent to a physical therapist licensed by the committee, and shall consist of assisting the supervising physical therapist in the treatment of patients of both sexes, varying ages and disabilities. Full-time work experience shall be credited on the basis of a compensated 40-hour work week, allowing for the usual and customary periods of absence. Work credit shall be given for part-time employment. The work experience shall have been obtained within ten years of the date the application for approval is filed with the committee, provided that, one-half of the experience has been obtained within five years of the application.
- (c) General education requirements shall consist of satisfactory completion of 15 semester units or 20 quarter units, including at least one course in each of the following areas:
 - (1) Natural sciences.
 - (2) Social or behavioral sciences.
 - (3) Humanities.
 - (4) English, speech, or mathematics.

Completion of a course in English composition which meets the Associates or Bachelor of Arts degree requirement of the college at which the course is taken, is required as part of the general education requirement, except that this subject shall not be required of those applicants who are foreign trained.

- (d) Proof of completion of the general education courses in subsection (c) and of the technical courses in subsection (a)(2) shall be submitted on an official transcript. The courses may be taken at any post-secondary institution that is accredited by an agency recognized by the Council on Post-Secondary Accreditation or the U.S. Department of Education. Credit will be given for academic units given by the educational institution for equivalent experience or education as well as for the results of equivalency or proficiency examinations.

NOTE: Authority cited: Sections 2615 and 2655.11, Business and Professions Code. Reference: Section 2655.3, Business and Professions Code.